

# **AXTELL BRIDGE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE**

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Region Three, Bozeman  
February 2005**

## **Proposed Action**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to improve the Axtell Bridge Fishing Access Site (FAS), located on the West Gallatin River, by increasing defined parking spaces, constructing a second entrance road, setting new rock barriers, and adding an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant accessible parking pad.

An additional parking area would be built to accommodate five more vehicles, while the current interior parking area would be reconfigured to also park five vehicles, thus creating a total of ten parking spaces. A new entrance road would be built from the east creating flow through traffic rather than the current same way in -- same way out situation. An ADA compliant parking pad would be added, thereby making the existing latrine and site more accessible for disabled visitors. Rock barriers would be placed to define parking and vehicle limits, and new regulation and informational signing would be installed.

## **Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on November 23, 2004.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken for 30 days. The EA was mailed to 27 individuals and groups; legal notices were printed in the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* and the *Helena Independent Record*; and the EA was posted on the FWP webpage: <http://www.fwp.mt.gov>.

## **Summary of Public Comment**

Three comments were received on the proposal.

- 1) An adjacent neighbor requested that FWP include four actions in the project in order to discourage and mitigate trespassing. These four items are: move the new entrance as far south as possible away from the private property boundary, plant trees along the northern side of the new development for screening, place sufficient barrier rocks on-site to discourage visitors from wandering on to

adjacent private property, and to post signs at strategic locations in order to “educate” users about the public/private land interface.

Response: All four of the suggested action items are reasonable and affordable within the scope and budget of the proposed project. The neighbor will be asked for on-site input on the new entrance road location and for the strategic placement of barrier rocks for “steering” visitors away from our mutual property line. New tree plantings (conifers preferred) will be included in the project bid and placed along the edge of the new road entrance. Appropriate signing regarding trespass and stream access will be erected along the river at the FAS northern property boundary.

- 2) At the time of the EA distribution, The Montana State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) had not reviewed the cultural survey for the proposed Axtell Bridge project. Consequently, they could not give any recommendations regarding the impacts of the project to cultural resources in the proposed construction area. This position was stated in a letter dated November 24, 2004.

Response: On January 5, 2005, FWP received a letter from SHPO, in which they stated that there is a low likelihood of impacts to cultural resources if the proposed project should proceed.

- 3) A private citizen wrote, “I do believe that many local people will be happy with the improvements you plan to do at Axtell Bridge. Being close to town, it looks like a good thing!”

### **Final Environmental Assessment for the Axtell Bridge Fishing Access Site Improvements Proposal**

There are no modifications necessary to the to the Draft Environmental Assessment based on public comment. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

### **Decision**

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment and the need for providing parking facilities at Axtell Fishing Access, it is my decision to proceed with the improvement project.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

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Patrick J. Flowers  
Region Three Supervisor